

Farmers' markets about to open in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

It's time to abandon the produce section of the grocery store. Farmers' market season in Lake Tahoe starts a week from today.

Lake Tahoe Markets, which runs three markets in the basin, is returning to Kahle Community Park on Wednesdays from 4-7pm. Last year this market moved across the highway to accommodate construction on Kingsbury Grade. Incline Village's market at Tunnel Creek continues on Thursdays from 4-7pm and in Crystal Bay at the Tahoe Biltmore the market is Fridays from 10am-2pm. All open next week.



Produce from Steve Rozier's farm will be featured at his Tahoe markets.
Photo/Provided

Steve Rozier, who runs Lake Tahoe Markets, expects a ton of strawberries, some stone fruit and residual winter citrus to dominate the early markets.

"I believe consumers like to come out and touch the produce," Rozier said.

Each of his markets is a little different. There is some

overlap in vendors as well as site-specific purveyors of produce and other goods. Most of the farmers are from Nevada.

“All of the markets have their own personalities,” Rozier told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Rozier, for the first time, will also be bringing his own produce from the Carson Valley. Dani Bug Organics, at 2½ acres, is considered boutique farm.

Through the winter he has been delivering produce boxes to consumers. That ends when the markets open.



The Ski Run market has produce and entertainment.
Photo/Provided

The two South Lake Tahoe markets kick off their seasons the first week of June. The El Dorado County Certified Farmers Market begins June 2 and will go through mid-October. It returns to the American Legion parking lot from 8am-1pm on Tuesdays. The Ski Run market in front of Blue Angel Café begins June 5. It is Fridays from 3-8pm.

“Some of the vegetables will be quite a bit earlier,” Jim Coalwell, who runs the Tuesday market, told *Lake Tahoe News*. This is because of the drought.

The pear crop in El Dorado County has been hit hard by fire blight.

"There's been quite a bit of damage to pears and apples. Fire blight attacks and kills the blossoms," Coalwell said.

He also runs the Placerville market, which starts this weekend.

Coalwell said the local farmers are doing OK with their water supply, and therefore what they can grow. The same is not true for the Fresno and Watsonville farmers who attend the South Tahoe market. For some of those farmers their water supply has been drastically reduced. Like last year, some fields will be fallow.

With most of the goods coming from small markets, Coalwell does not anticipate the supply of produce to be less than years past.

Some of the bigger changes Coalwell is contending with are rules coming out of Sacramento.

"The state used to take a 60-cent assessment per stall, now they want \$2," Coalwell said. "Theoretically it is used for inspectors to keep the markets honest."

Processed food is being more tightly regulated by the state, as are some of the rules for farmers. These are all things Coalwell is still getting a handle on.

This marks the fifth year of the Friends of Ski Run market, which is run by a nonprofit. More than 20 vendors will be offering organic farm fresh produce, honey, locally raised meats, hot food for dinner, handmade ice cream, handmade chocolates and other treats.

There is also a bounce house and face painting for kids, live art performances-demos and local live music.

"We strive to support local entrepreneurs with more than 85 percent of our vendors being South Lake locals. With drought conditions and new regulations for farms, it is a crucial time

to help support our local farmers and food supply,” Michaela Dickson, one of the organizers, told *Lake Tahoe News*.